

Qualitative Research  
April 2019

## **A QUALITATIVE LOOK ON HOW SOCIAL MEDIAS IMPACT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

The intent of this study was to understand the role of social media on prospective international students. The primary focus was the impact social media had on international students' decisions in choosing a university. Multiple case-study research was conducted at the Claremont Colleges and California State University, Los Angeles. Sixteen international students were interviewed on their respective school campus. The data was coded using NVivo 12 a qualitative data analysis software. The research indicates that there is a continual shift of international student's usage & needs in regard to social media. It was determined that current security issues exist with social media, students are learning more secure ways to meet their information needs.

### **Introduction**

Social media is an integral component of modern society. It is a multifaceted tool that creates an ease of communication that did not previously exist. Social media plays an integral role in the manner in which we connect and communicate with one another. Social media is utilized as a source of information and influences the decisions made by its users. With the

increased prevalence of social media, universities have begun utilizing it as a tool to connect with prospective international students.

## **Literature Review**

A literature search of peer-reviewed journal articles produced several notable journal articles. Oh, Butler, and Lee (2014) conducted mixed method research to analyze the behavior of international students when settling into a new environment. The findings included international students' specific information needs and various social and non-social information sources used to meet those information needs. The authors "hope that a better understanding of international students' information behavior can contribute to the efforts of many individuals and organizations that support international students' adjustment and acculturation" (Oh et al., 2014, p. 10).

Sin and Kim (2013) conducted a quantitative research study that proposed that social networking sites may play an important role in international students' everyday life information seeking. Their findings suggest that information seeking strategies can contribute to a smoother cross-cultural transition. The authors' hope that their study would "encourage more SNS (social networking site) research with an information behavior focus, especially in terms of the interactions among SNS affordance, personality, life stage, information needs, and information satisfaction" (Sin and Kim, 2013, p. 115). Based on their findings further qualitative research would prove useful on the impact of social media on the academic decisions made by international students.

## **Research Questions**

To understand the role of social media on prospective international students, with a behavior focus, the following research questions were formed:

Q1 – What is the role of social media in supporting international students’ understanding and awareness about academic, financial, social, cultural and health information?

Q2 – What is the influence of social media on international students’ choice of universities?

### **Research Methodology**

A qualitative study was conducted with a primary focus on social media’s impact on the decisions made by international students, specifically in the context of choosing a university. The exploratory multiple case-study methodology was utilized in this research. This method was utilized for the following reasons. Firstly, the research question explores social media phenomenon which is a dynamic phenomenon. Secondly, there is still little understanding of this phenomenon from alternative modalities such as its impact and how or why this phenomenon occurs. The experience of individuals and the context of the social media phenomenon is critical. In addition, the case study methodology is considered as the most popular qualitative research method. Which is also appropriate for answering how or why questions and supports field-based research conducted in natural settings (Kvasny & Keil, 2006, p. 33). The multiple case study methodology was utilized as it allows for a more varied exploration of the research questions, when compared to the single case study methodology (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 27). These reasons made the case study methodology appropriate and suitable for this study.

The design of the case study was created carefully based on comprehensive literature analysis and the scope of the research questions in addition to the available resources and the identified audience. Thus, that the selected cases for this study were Claremont Graduate University (CGU) and California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA). Both CGU and

CSULA are appropriate and considered as rich cases due to the diversity of international students from different nationalities, ages, genders, which enriched the gathered and collected data and enhanced the quality of findings. The case study research will be conducted at the Claremont Colleges and CSULA. Sixteen international students (graduate and undergraduate) will be interviewed on their respective school campus.

### **Data Collection and Structure**

The case study research was conducted at the Claremont Colleges and CSULA. Sixteen international students (graduate and undergraduate) were interviewed on their respective school campus. Twelve of the international students were from CGU from all different departments, such as Drucker School of Management, school of Systems & Technology, and School of Arts & Humanities. Four of the international students were from the College of Business and Economics at CSULA.

CGU is a private, all-graduate research university located in Claremont, California. We choose CGU as a research site because CGU is the oldest all-graduate institution in the United States, with well reputation and many notable alumni in different fields all over the world. As a member of the Claremont Colleges, CGU has over 2,000 students, in which there are over 400 international students, from over 100 countries.

Each interview planned last from 10 mins to 20 mins, and to represent as much as international students, our interview covered over as much different countries as we can, such as from Saudi Arabia to Koran, from China to India, from England to Norway, etc. We also collected the interview's other information included their gender, age range, and programs (master degree or Doctoral). The details can refer to the Table-1 Data Collection

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**International Students    Totally 16 interviews, 20 mins each**


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Gender	Ten of them are females; Six of them are males
Age	Twelve of them are between 20's to 30's; Four of them are over 30 years old
County	Three from Saudi Arabia; Five from China; One from Korea; Three from India; One from Thailand; Two from England; Two from Norway
Department/School	Eight from school of Systems & Technology; One from School of Arts; One from School of Mathematics; The rest Four from CSULA
MS/PhD	Seven of them are on Master program; Five of them are on PhD program; Four of them are undergraduate students

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Table-1 Data Collection

Actual primary data was collected using semi-structured interviews, utilizing a combination of pre-formulated questions (see Appendix A) and questions that may emerge throughout the conversation. The timing of each interview was flexible; however, the time was 20 minutes. Interviewees were from, 13 different countries including: Saudi Arabia, Korea, China, India, England, Norway, etc. Demographics were collected for the interviewees gender, age range, and programs (Undergraduate, Masters, or Ph.D.), see Table 2.

Demographic Data	Gender	Country	Age Range	School	Education
Interview 01	Female	China	20-35	CGU	Ph.D.
Interview 02	Male	China	20-35	CGU	Master's
Interview 03	Female	China	20-35	CGU	Ph.D.
Interview 04	Male	India	20-35	CGU	Master's
Interview 05	Female	China	20-35	CGU	Master's
Interview 06	Female	Saudi Arabia	20-35	CGU	Ph.D.
Interview 07	Female	Saudi Arabia	20-35	CGU	Ph.D.
Interview 08	Female	Saudi Arabia	20-35	CGU	Ph.D.
Interview 09	Male	China	20-35	CGU	Master's
Interview 10	Female	Korea	20-35	CGU	Master's
Interview 11	Male	India	20-35	CGU	Ph.D.
Interview 12	Male	India	35-50	CGU	Ph.D.
Interview 13	Male	England	20-35	CSULA	Undergraduate
Interview 14	Male	Norway	20-35	CSULA	Master's
Interview 15	Male	Norway	20-35	CSULA	Master's
Interview 16	Male	Thailand	35-50	CGU	Ph.D.

Table 2 Summary of Demographic Data

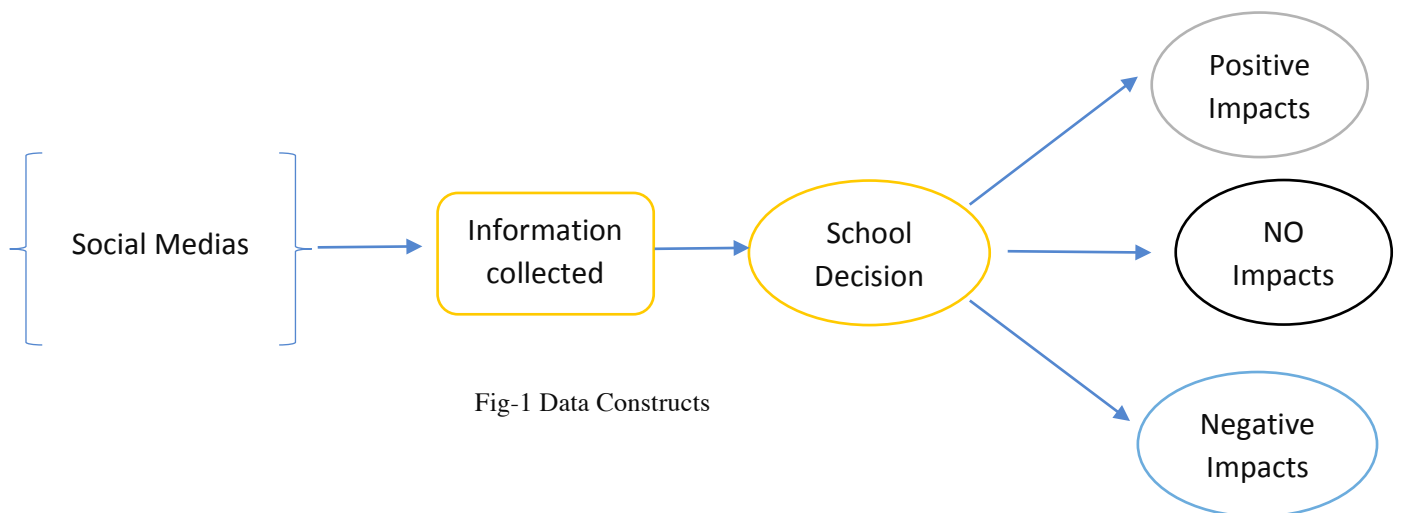
Following data collection, each of the sixteen interviews were transcribed (see Appendices B, C, and D). The data files were imported into NVivo 12, a qualitative data analysis software. A codebook was created to sort the interviewees responses (see Appendix E). Each of the interviewee's responses were individually coded. A case classification was created to enter the demographic information. The data and demographic information was then tabulated and visualized.

Our interview collected three main type of information:

First, the type of social media the international students use, such as Facebook, Instagram, etc.

Second, type information collected from social media about schools, such as Financial, Social life; school Cultural, safety and health, etc.

Third, the interview focused on personal experiences that if the information from social media impacts the school decision. General, the impacts can be classified to positive and negative impacts, and totally no impacts.



## Results

When coding the contents of each node was viewed to assist in answering questions from the data. During the interviews the students were asked about which types of social media they use. The node **Social Media Used** was used to create a matrix coding query, then a stacked column chart, visualizing the student's responses was possible. In Appendix F (Figure F-1), it was determined Instagram and Facebook were the student's favorite choices.

When determining the role of social media in supporting international students' understanding and awareness about academic, financial, social, cultural and health information, the students were asked two questions. What types of information needs do you have? Was your information need satisfied for each of the different needs? The node, **Information Needs from Social Media** was used to create a matrix coding query, then a stacked column chart, visualizing the student's responses. In Appendix F (Figure F-2), it can be determined that international students' needs are more likely to be met in regard to academic, schooling, social and entertainment needs. Overall, the student responses to the first research question were not very detailed and it was difficult to see a significant result. When looking at the second question and the node **Satisfied with Social Media Choices**, the students' responses were split. Six of the international students responded that their information needs were satisfied. Three students responded that they only use social media for "low-impact decisions" and not for "life decisions." Four students responded that their information needs were not satisfied. One student thought that social media is "biased," another student was concerned with "privacy" issues. Three students did not address the question.



When determining what the influence of social media on international students' choice of universities, an embedded node was looked at: Information Needs from Social Media ► **Used for Decisions When Choosing Schools**. Eleven of the students responded that information from social media had no impact on the school they choose. Three students did respond, that a form of social media did influence their decision. Two students didn't respond to the question. Five of the students did respond, that they used Google to search for the necessary information. Overall, there was a significant response to the second research question, meaning social media didn't influence international students' choice of universities.

We research looked at determining how the international students felt about making decisions, and if there might be some correlation with how students used social media. Looking at the embedded node, Personality ► **Decision Making**. Most every student stated that they make decisions easily, they gather information from the internet, and don't depend on social media for making decisions. The research indicates, its possible students wouldn't admit to an unknown interviewer that they were having difficulty making decisions. It was determined that giving the students personality tests would be far more reliable.

The international students were asked what their favorite form of social media was. Looking at the node, **Favorite Form of Social Media** and using a matrix coding query to create a stacked column chart the student's responses were visualized. In Appendix F (Figure F-3), you can see that Twitter and YouTube were their favorite choices. However, using the matrix coding query didn't produce enough responses. In addition, looking at the coding in detail it was found there weren't enough responses. The question probably needed clarification, because there already had been a discussion about information needs being satisfied by the students' choices of social media.

A word frequency query was used to find the 50 most used words in all of the data and a word cloud was created (see Appendix G). In addition, a text search query using the word “decision” was used to create a word tree (see Appendix H).

## Conclusion

An overall conclusion of the present study is that the findings were considerably different than Sin and Kim (2013). Their “findings indicated that a majority of their respondents frequently used social networking sites for everyday life information seeking” (Sin and Kim, 2013, p. 107). The research indicates that many of the international students interviewed, mentioned a change in their use of social media. With the security issues present with social media, students seem to be using more secure ways to meet their information needs. Further research should consider international students’ ability to meet their information needs, with the current cybersecurity threats.

## References

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## Appendix A

### Interview Questions for International Students; Here for Studying Purposes

- **At start of interview**
  - Interview is **anonymous**
  - Can be stopped at any time
  - OK to **record?**
  - Can information be used in **further research**
  - The purpose of our research is look at the **impact of social media** on **students**
    - Which will **include** the **impact of social media** on international students, when **choosing the universities**, they want to attend
- **Start Recording**
- **How do you describe the type of personality you have?**
- **How do you describe your life stage? (Age?)**
  - 12-20?
  - 20-35?
  - 35-50?
  - 50-80?
- **Which types of information needs do you have from social media? Priorities?**
  - Academic & Schooling?
  - Financial?
  - Social?
  - Cultural?
  - Health?
- **Which types of social media do you use?**
- **For each type of information, the interviewee chooses, which type of social media do they use?**
- **Ask student how satisfied they are with their choices of social media?**
  - **Did the interviewees choice of social media meet their needs?**
- **Ask student what their favorite form of social media is?**

**Thank interviewee for their time & stop the recording**

## Appendix B

### Interview Transcripts – Eve Thullen

#### 1. Interview – Yubo Fu

##### Personal Information:

Name: Yubo Fu

Gender: Female

Age Range: 20-30

Country: China

School and Department: CGU, CISAT

Graduate(MS/PhD)/Undergraduate: PhD

The Social Media Use: Facebook, Twitter, Wechat

##### The Information collected from particular social media:

From CGU Chinese student association WeChat group, I collect some school information that including how people think about this school, how do they like IST program and how much financial aid they receive,

##### Social Media and School Choose:

The information from social media had no impact on my school choosing. Academic reputation and school ranking were the main reasons that I chose this school. I got this information from Google, and US News Ranking, rather than social media.

##### Impact Level:

Generally, the information I got from WeChat group did not have any impact on my school choosing. It only provided additional information about this school and. The information from social media is kind of biased, different people have different opinions and different way of thinking.

#### 2. Interview – Kevin Jia

##### Personal Information:

Your Name: Kevin Jia

Gender: Male

Age Range: 25

Country: China

Your School and Department: CGU IST

Graduate (MS/PhD)/Undergraduate: MS

The Social Media You Use: WeChat

**The Information collected from particular social media:**

Safety; Cultural; Environment, for example low international student rates in CGU WeChat Group, get school information from friends

**Social Media and School Choose:**

WeChat Group, get school information from friends, I talked to them about each school. When I select the list of graduate school, I made a list with 10 school, and ranked them from A to E, based on academic, social life, cultural, and safety. And one school, USC, was cut from this list due to its horrible environment and bad safety.

**Impact Level:**

but it is only a part of my decision. For most cases, I collect that information from Google or Baidu.

## 3. Interview – Grace Zhao

**Personal Information:**

Your Name: Grace Yi

Gender: Female

Age Range: in 30's

Country: China

Your School and Department: CGU CISAT

Graduate (MS/PhD)/Undergraduate: PhD

The Social Media You Use: SinaWeibo, Ins, Facebook

**The Information collected from particular social media:**

I used SinaWeibo and Facebook to get general information that I plan to go. This social media for me just information providing in Academic Reputation, Financial, Social life, Cultural, Health, and Safety.

**Social Media and School Choose:**

The information from Social Media I listed above doesn't impacted on my choosing school because I already did my own research through internet for the school choosing.

**Impact Level:**

It is not the main reason that I Choose the school because Social media doesn't know my personal situation in school choosing. The information from social media is helpful information.

## 4. Interviewee – Pratik

**Personal Information:**

Name: Pratik Chakraborty

**Gender:** Male

**Age Range:** 35

**Country:** India

Your School and Department: CGU IST

Graduate (MS/PhD)/Undergraduate: MS

The Social Media You Use: Facebook and Instagram

**The Information collected from particular social media:**

Social life, Cultural, Housing

**Social Media and School Choose:**

- No impact of social media on my decision making process.
- Social media did not impact my decision in any way. The only reason I used social media was to find out housing options, as the college housing was highly expensive.
- Social media did not have any impact on my decision of choosing the school. My choice was purely based on my past experiences in the education department and the affordability of fees. Social media for me is a fish-market, and I would be happy to refer it in order to take minute or low-impact decisions (restaurants, salons, others.) but not for life decisions or decisions that involve such high financial burdens

5. Interviewee – Zoe Zhuang

Personal Information:

Your Name: Zoe Zhuang

**Gender:** Female

**Age Range:** 30

**Country:** China

Your School and Department: CGU Modern Arts

Graduate (MS/PhD)/Undergraduate: MS

The Social Media You Use: WeChat, Instagram

**The Information collected from particular social media:**

Academic Reputation, Social life, and Safety, Social activities

**Social Media and School Choose:**

I got some school reputation from Facebook, in Facebook found CGU Group, I got some information about CGU; also one of my friend is an art student in CGU, she posted some pictures about CGU in WeChat, I saw those pictures and getting some social life information about CGU.

**Impact Level:**

Sort of, but It is not the main reason that I choose CGU, I checked most information from Google.

The social media information just a support information for my school choosing. I chose the CGU cause its location.

Social Media provide important information to my normal life, but if it is a big life decision, I would not trust social media.



## Appendix C

### Interview Transcripts – Manar Al-kayed

# Interview – 1

#### Personal Information:

Name: anonymous (MR)

Gender: Female

Age Range: 20-35

Country: suadai arabia

School and Department: CGU, CISAT

Graduate(MS/PhD)/Undergraduate: PhD

Decision making,

I can take decisions easily, I use the internet to gather information, but I think that social media don't impact or effect my decisions.

Social media usage,

Yes, I use social media

#### The Information collected from particular social media:

Educational, medical, cultural

#### Social Media and School Choose:

The information from social media had no impact on my school choosing. Noting that my decision was in 2012 for me and I see that social media that time has less power in 2012 Compared to 2019 than nowadays. I got this information from Google, and US News Ranking, rather than social media.

#### Used Social media application and platforms

Twitter , snapchat, Instagram,

#### Impact Level:

Information from social media doesn't not impact my decisions in any field just updates what is going around the information, it did not impact my school choosing.

Information priority,  
medical, cultural

Satisfaction.

Approximately satisfied

favorite social media  
twitter and snapchat Instagram

## interview 2

### Personal Information:

Name: anonymous fares

Gender: Female

Age Range: 20-35

Country: Saudi Arabia

School and Department: CGU, IST

Graduate (MS/PhD)/Undergraduate: PhD

### Decision making,

I can take decisions easily but I consult based on the type of the decision sometimes I ask friend and family and use social media also,

But in to choose the university I made search on twitter, and YouTube which was 6 years ago where for me it doesn't impact my decision, but it open my eyes about universities around,

### Social media usage,

Yes, I use social media

### The Information collected from particular social media:

Cultural, social, health, schooling and sports

### Used Social media application and platforms

Twitter , YouTube, I try to use snapchat, Instagram but I see that it about others personal life, threat privacy so I don't like it., I use Facebook before but I give up using Facebook.

### Social Media and School Choosing:

The information from social media had no impact on my school choosing. Mainly google search impact my decisions more

### Impact Level:

I see that social media helps in fining schools, it may impact the decisions, for me my friend graduated from this university so he advised helps me to study in this universities, but social media impact students design in finding school.

### Priorities

I see it is priority is for Cultural, social, health, sport

Satisfaction.

satisfied especially twitter from both quality and level of information.

favorite social media

YouTube no. 1 then is twitter, because by using twitter you need to interact with other.

## interview 3

### Personal Information:

Name: anonymous Sara

Gender: Female

Age Range: 20-35

Country: Saudi Arabia

School and Department: CGU,

Graduate(MS/PhD)/Undergraduate: PhD

Social media usage,

Yes, I use social media

Decision making,

I can take decisions easily, I use the internet to gather information, google is my choice to search and gather information, social media doesn't impact or effect my decisions,

**The Information collected from particular social media:**

health, cultural and events in educational sector (universities)

**Used Social media application and platforms**

Twitter , YouTube,

I try to use snapchat, Instagram but I see that it about others personal life, threat privacy so I don't like it.

I use Facebook before but I give up using Facebook.

**Social Media and School Choose:**

The information from social media had no impact on my school choosing. Mainly google search impact my decisions more

**Impact Level:**

Information from social media doesn't not impact my decisions in any field, but help me to know what events near me mainly for the universities events .

Satisfaction.

Approximately satisfied

favorite social media

Instagram, snapchat

## interview 4

### Personal Information:

Name: anonymous (Steve)

Gender: male

Age Range: 20-35

Country: China

School and Department: CGU, IST

Graduate (MS/PhD)/Undergraduate: Master

Decision making,

People can affect my decision face to face not in the virtual world,

**Social media usage,**

Yes, I use social media, I use social media to connect with my friends but do not for information.

**The Information collected from particular social media:**

Not for any information

**Used Social media application and platforms**

WeChat, WhatsApp, sometimes linkdin( checking it one time per day)

**Social Media and School Choosing:**

The information from linkdin impact my decision in some degree, especially in job hunting. But I think social media could affect people decisions

**Impact Level:**

Social media don't impact my decision In choosing this university.

Priorities

NA

Satisfaction.

Not satisfied with information from social media platforms and application, I prefer to use professional database to know more information

favorite social media

WeChat

## interview -5

### Personal Information:

Name: anonymous (xxx)

Gender: female

Age Range: 20-35

Country: korea

School and Department: CGU

Graduate (MS/PhD)/Undergraduate: master

### Decision making,

I can take decisions by myself easily

### Social media usage,

Yes, I use social media,

### The Information collected from particular social media:

No information, using Instagram for travels and entertainment little bit, schooling and academic account for schools' events

### Used Social media application and platforms

Instagram, I have Facebook account but not using it.

### Social Media and School Choosing:

It doesn't not impact my decisions in choosing this university because I choose university based on other type of sources such as newspaper and searching to know the ranking

### Impact Level:

Social media don't impact my decisions. social media restricted; school account is not UpToDate because it is also uploaded by another person who upload the event in the same day

Priorities

NA

Satisfaction.

favorite social media

## Appendix D

### Interview Transcripts – Jan Weissman

#### Interview Transcript #1

Name: N

Gender: Male

Life Stage (Age): 20-35

Country: India

School: CGU

You said it is okay to record: Yes

The interview is anonymous, we will not put names on it. OK

You have the right to withdraw at any time, during the interview. OK

If we decide to do further research, may we use this interview? Yes

Our research is looking at the impact of social media on the international students' and how it has affected decisions and how they use it. We are also looking at the impact of social media and if it helped you decide to come to Claremont.

In general, how do you make decisions?

Its more like if there is an opportunity, and what's the cost of that opportunity, and if I will be able to pay that cost. It doesn't have to be spontaneous, timewise, social wise, and like family or not, in all those decisions.

Do you listen to friends and family when you're making decisions?

I might consider it at points, but then even if there is a majority of a certain direction, it's not necessary that I take the same direction, just because family told me too.

When you have information needs, what kind of information needs would you use social media for? For instance, academic, or schooling, or financial, or health?

I would not say that I use social media at all, for these things. However, currently its different because I am already here, and know how to approach certain things without using social media.

On the contrary, when I came here for the first time during my masters, the only time I used social media was to look for other students who had already done the program, to ask like the basic questions about how the program is, and where can I live, are there dorms for the students and so on and so forth.

So, this was for your masters, after you decided to come her?

Yes, the decision was already made though, it's just that for further information. That was what I looked for in social media back then. Now that I know how to not to use social media to look for this information.

When you first can, that was what you used it for. What was your favorite type of social media to search for other students?

Facebook

So now, how do you use social media?

Now, I use social media to see what people post about political topics in the United States and India. Other countries too but, mostly because of these two places, because I have a direct connection to these two specifically. However, I really try my best, to open the article, read it completely, and then make my judgement, and also do some research for to see how right or fake was the news, in the current situation that I feel that's something very important.

What social media do you use when you're looking up political topics? Still Facebook

So, you mostly use Facebook? Yes

So, that's your favorite? Yes

Is there anything else you use besides Facebook?

Not really, very casually once in a month I open Instagram and Twitter.

In terms of deciding to come here to Claremont, how did you make that decision?

So, for me it's was different than regular students. The place that I work at, in that particular company, they provide opportunities to apply for different programs for Ph.D. and masters.

So, you were already here?

Yes, I was already here and as an opportunity, I wanted to do further studies. I had been hopeful for that opportunity. The only option for the Ph.D. was this school, from my company. So, I applied to get the scholarship, once that was done, I just decided that I would be studying here.

So, originally you didn't come here just to study?

From India, I came here to study here, here in the United States, to study for my masters. Then I got a job after finishing up and graduating. I have been working for like three years now, and during that process, there's opportunity, so I continue my work, along with that I find out some time to go to school.

So, when you were deciding to come here for your masters, there are a lot of schools here in the states, how did you come to that decision?

I would say, one of the most important things was how much it was going to cost, monetary wise. Then, what are the opportunities out there after graduating, in the area, or just by the name of the school, did it add value to my resume, and then finally, what kind of students came here and what are they doing now. So that was my part of my finding in social media, where trying to know that, where they are these days.

So, that's when you used Facebook?

You know what, I will circle back, now that we are talking about it, LinkedIn is something I used. LinkedIn is like almost as much as Facebook, on a daily basis.

Thank you, I really appreciate your time.

Absolutely

Thank you!

## Interview Transcript #2



Name: B  
 Gender: Male  
 Life Stage (Age): 35 – 50  
 Country: India  
 School: CGU

You said it is okay to record: Yes

The interview is anonymous, we will not put names on it. OK

You have the right to withdraw at any time, during the interview. OK

If we decide to do further research, may we use this interview? Yes

Our research is looking at the impact of social media on the international students' and how it has affected decisions and how they use it. We are also looking at the impact of social media and if it helped you decide to come to Claremont.

In general, how do you make decisions? Do you listen to friends and family when you're making decisions?

What I do generally, I just understand what I'm trying to do. Then indirectly, I take the opinions from my friends and others, not directly because sometimes they don't understand, they don't think the way I think. Because I'm the person wanted to do, I have self-motivation, they don't have that motivation, I just grab the general idea from them, then maybe sometimes I expose it right away, I'm asking that, then they get the feeling. Of course, after that I will get the opinions from the families. Generally, I observe and listen to others, but that will not be my final decision, use it in my decision process.

How do you use social media now? What do you use it for?

I use it, basically I use social media for information knowledge, I don't do too much posting or anything. Information, because it's a multiple pool of information.

What type of information? News? Social?

News, politics, and general. Its interesting how social media influences young teenagers, to the elders, a all the peoples in the world

How you use it for Academic or schooling?

For academic, I don't use social media. I do use WhatsApp, it's also social media, to communicate with people and send your opinion because everybody people will see it.

What is your favorite social media?

WhatsApp

How do you use social media?

Facebook, I just read it, I don't contribute. WhatsApp, I contribute.

When you decided to come here to study, how did you use social media to help you make the decision?  
 I didn't.

In terms of deciding to come here to Claremont, how did you make that decision?

Once my idea was personally, I wanted to get my doctorate level. This was my idea, my desire, but I could not do it because of family issues and reasons. I needed to get a job, then I thought it was the time for me to do it, then Claremont-Esri's sponsoring doctorate level, so I make use of that opportunity.

When you came here, was it go to school or to work first?

I came to work, I work for fifteen years, right. (Now school) It's a elaboration program, plus it's a personal motivation, it's a personal interest to have that.

When you use social media, how does it meet your needs?

I do further research, that is only a triggering point. I don't take anything, any, I won't believe that, but that I will use it as my research material.

How do you think social media impacts students schooling decisions?

Social media using once you take a decision, or in the decision process, students will communicate with others using social media. But they can easily contact, they can search for Claremont, even though they don't know, students attending Claremont. Then they will just pin them. How is it? Is it good?

Thank you so much, I appreciate you coming down.

No problem, no problem.

It was nice meeting you, thank you!

### Interview Transcript #3

Name: D

Gender: Male

Life Stage (Age): 20 – 35

Country: England (Exchange Student)

School: CSULA (California State University, Los Angeles)

You said it is okay to record: Yes

The interview is anonymous, we will not put names on it. Yes

You have the right to withdraw at any time, during the interview. Yes

Our research is looking at the impact of social media on the international students' and how it has affected decisions and how they use it. We are also looking at the impact of social media and if it helped you decide to come to CSULA.

In general, how do you make decisions? Do you listen to friends and family when you're making decisions?

I would say in general; I'd say I'm definitely be influenced by people's experiences. I definitely account for that, but at the same time, like I would say that I'm pretty independent when comes to that.

So, you listen to what they say?

I consider that, then I make my own decisions based off that. It's done well so far.

What do you think your social media needs are right now? School? Friendship? Social? How do you use social media right now?

I would say that I don't use it that much for school. Maybe stuff like Twitter, I use it more for news rather than actually using it as a tool for like social media. For news, to see what's going back in England etc. In terms of Instagram, I would say that's more for like friends, just like catching what they are doing and stuff. Facebook is not really something I use anymore. So, I would say its between those two for me.

Do you ever look up financial information or health information?  
Through social media, no I wouldn't say I really use social media for that.

Are you satisfied with your choices of social media?

To be honest, I'd say I'm happy, because if there was anything else, I'd probably spend too much time on them. I already spend too much time already, I think so.

So, which of the two is your favorite?

I'd say I get more utility from Twitter. Cause its actually more informative and stuff. I probably spend a lot more time on Instagram even though, I don't know, I'd say it's more addictive.

In terms of picking a school to come here, how did you use social media in deciding to come here?  
Basically, how it works I was in like an exchange program with my school back in England. We only had like, I was very set on the United States, and there was only six schools in America that they had, I kind of did it more on like which state I really wanted to study in. California stuck out to me, but I guess social media made me feel like I'm more suited to California than it would be.

Which type did you use?

How did you use social media to make your decision?

I would say it was a mixture of Instagram and also community like using WhatsApp, or anything to talk to my friends that were already here.

Well, thank you! I appreciate it, thank you for doing this.

#### Interview Transcript #4

Name: D-2

Gender: Male

Life Stage (Age): 20 – 35

Country: Norway (Exchange Student)

School: CSULA (California State University, Los Angeles)

You said it is okay to record: Ok

The interview is anonymous, we will not put names on it. Ok

You have the right to withdraw at any time, during the interview. Ok

Our research is looking at the impact of social media on the international students' and how it has affected decisions and how they use it. We are also looking at the impact of social media and if it helped you decide to come to CSULA.

In general, how do you make decisions? Do you listen to friends and family when you're making decisions?

It depends, if it's a small decision I make it myself, if it's a big decision I ask for help, for sure.

**Do you use social media?** What types of social media do you use?

Yes, any type of social media I can **connect with** my **friends, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube.**

**When you use social media, do you use it for different types of information?**

Like **YouTube**, if I'm doing a course I just look up like tutorials and stuff. Other than that, I just use **Google** or ask friends from **Facebook.**

So, you use social media mostly for friends?

Ya, Ya, Ya

What is your **favorite** form of social media?

My favorite is probably **YouTube**. I can spend all my days just looking at **videos.**

What is your **favorite** in terms of **talking to friends?**

That's probably **Facebook**. I hear a lot of people use WhatsApp here, but it's not my favorite.

When you decided to be an exchange student, how did you use any social media to look up where you wanted to go to? How did you decide?

At my university they have like this page, full of the schools we can go to. So, we just look that up, then we pick a school, and then have to talk to our counselor.

**How did you look up information about the schools?**

**Yeah sure, not on social media, just used Google, and then went to school home pages.**

**Do you think you are satisfied with the social media you use? Would you like to see anything different?**

**I think, yeah sure, it does meet my needs. As long as I can connect with my friends, wherever they are, like it's okay.**

Are some of your friends also going to different schools?

Yea, they are going to Europe.

Thank you so much, I really appreciate it! It's nice meeting you.

No problem, not problem.

## **Interview Transcript #5**

Name: L

Gender: Male

Life Stage (Age): **20 – 35**

Country: **Norway (Exchange Student)**

School: **CSULA** (California State University, Los Angeles)

You said it is okay to record: Yes

The interview is anonymous, we will not put names on it. Ok

You have the right to withdraw at any time, during the interview. Ok

Our research is looking at the impact of social media on the international students' and how it has affected decisions and how they use it. We are also looking at the impact of social media and if it helped you decide to come to CSULA.

When you made the decision to come here, did you make it just yourself? Did you listen to family members?

It was pretty much just myself.

If your family didn't want you to come here, would you listen? Did you do what you wanted? My dad wasn't too happy, he didn't want me to come. He likes having family close. He basically doesn't like having me far away. I guess.

How do you use social media? Do you use it for Academic reasons? Financial? Social?  
I guess I use it for social reasons. I pretty much use it to talk to friends.

Did you use social media to decide which school were coming to?  
No

How did you research the schools?

So, my university in Norway has a list of schools that they cooperate with. I just looked up the ones in California and I figured out what I would like.

Did you research the schools in Los Angeles?

There was only one school in Los Angeles

So, you just knew you wanted to come to Los Angeles

Pretty much. Also, the other schools in California, they had a, how do I say this, their deadline for applying had passed. So, it was an easy choice.

What types of social media do you use?

Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram, I use YouTube a little, I mean I use it to, I follow this fitness guy, he's like showing you how to exercise and stuff. I use it socially and I don't think I use it for anything else, I mean I use it for entertainment.

What is your favorite type of social media?

I also forgot, I use Reddit, I just look at the funny pictures, or memes, it's called memes. I would say Reddit is my favorite. It's probably the one I use the most, I just don't think of it as a social media.

How would you say that you use Reddit?

I would say that, I look at pictures, sometimes they post interesting stuff that has happened. It's not a news platform, but every once in a while, there are news articles that's actually pretty interesting. For example, have you seen the black hole thing? They have the first ever picture of a black hole, it looks like a blurry donut, but still it's pretty interesting.

Do you think you're satisfied with what you get from the social media you use?

Yes

Would you like to see any changes?

Yes, too many advertisements. But I know that's not going to change.

Thank you so much, I really appreciate your time. It's nice meeting you.

### **Interview Transcript #6 – (Manar was the interviewer, I was in attendance)**

Name: W

Gender: Male

Life Stage (Age): 35 – 50

Country: Thailand

School: CGU

You said it is okay to record: Yes

The interview is anonymous. OK

You have the right to withdraw at any time, during the interview. OK

Our research is looking at the impact of social media on the international students' and how it has affected decisions and how they use it. We are also looking at the impact of social media and if it helped you decide to come to Claremont.

Are you using social media?

Technically, I use social media a lot, technically I used, let's see today 1 ½ hours to 1 hour 40 minutes.

What type of social media do you use?

I use Line, YouTube, Facebook, followed by Twitter. But YouTube, most of my time is spent on YouTube. Line is very famous for Asian people, it's like WhatsApp.

How do you think social media impacted your decision in choosing your university?

Yes, technically yes. In particular, like Facebook I think, when I listen to news or media on Facebook. They have some media from some universities like CGU, MIT, Harvard, Stanford on YouTube. They have new research, breakthrough research and the reputation of the university that appear on Facebook can impact students. Because everyone have social media, I mean Asian people, when they listen to their peer, people talking about the news, technically its very impactful in decision to choose universities, I think.

Do you consider yourself a person that is able to make a decision easily without support or the help from anyone? Or do you feel that before a decision you need a second level of support regardless of human support, social media support, technical support.

You mean decision support? What do you mean by support?

Sometimes people prefer to ask someone to make sure he is taken decision correctly or not.

Technically I can do a search on my own. Ok, I listen to people talking, that can be indirectly impact me. But I don't need other people to consult them. Sometimes I watch YouTube and I think humm, that can be indirect impact.

You said you are using social media around 1 ½ hours on a daily basis on average. So, do you think social media helps you to know information about academic, schooling, social, cultural, health, or financial information?

Social media, I think is something that people in common, can be something like political news, not much in term of professional, like medical doctor or engineer. Some have some impact, but I mean people like me I can use social media for something in general like news.

Do you think academic and schooling can be one of those information?

Can be, can be, one of those information. However, if you want to go to school's information, technically you can go directly to their website. Or a website that you can trust like US News, or social media too. So, you can use social media to raise questions and then direct to the website to confirm the information.

So, you don't adopt social media as a source of information, but it's to get the ideas?

To get part of the information, but in order to go to something deeper, technically I then social media first and then the website second.

Maybe you answered this question before, but which type of social media do you use? You said YouTube first, and then Line & then Facebook.  
Yes, yes.

What type of social media do you prefer to use that satisfies your needs?

Most of the time I use, well you can take Line out because it's for communication with people, but for news technically both Facebook and YouTube, they are equally 50% and 50%. Sometimes I search on YouTube for academics, Universities (CGU, Stanford, MIT). Any university you can search on YouTube. So, you can see some video clips, some news. I tend to be a visual person; I need picture video that's why I go to YouTube. Facebook you can see some friends and they make recommendation. Technically, if I have to pick between Facebook and YouTube, technically I prefer YouTube.

What is your favorite type of social media?

YouTube, social media can be entertainment.

Thank you so much for your time.

**Appendix E**  
**Codebook – Jan Weissman**

# Influence of Social Media on International Students

## Nodes

Name	Description	Files	References
Favorite Form of Social Media		0	0
Facebook		2	2
Instagram		2	2
Reddit		1	1
Snapchat		2	2
Twitter		3	3
WeChat		1	1
WhatsApp		1	1
YouTube		3	3
Information Needs from Social Media		2	2
Academic and Schooling		8	8
Cultural		6	6
Environmental		1	1
Financial		1	1
Health		5	5



Name	Description	Files	References
Housing		1	1
News		3	3
Political		3	3
Safety		3	3
Social and Entertainment		8	8
Sports		1	1
Used for Decisions When Choosing Schools		15	17
Personality		0	0
Decision Making		11	13
Satisfied with Social Media Choices		13	14
Social Media Used		0	0
Facebook		8	8
Instagram		9	9
Line		1	1
LinkedIn		2	2
Reddit		1	1
Sina Weibo		1	1
Snapchat		3	3
Twitter		6	6
WeChat		4	4
WhatsApp		2	2

Name	Description	Files	References
YouTube		4	4

## Appendix F

Created By: Jan Weissman

Figure F-1  
Types of Social Media used by International Students

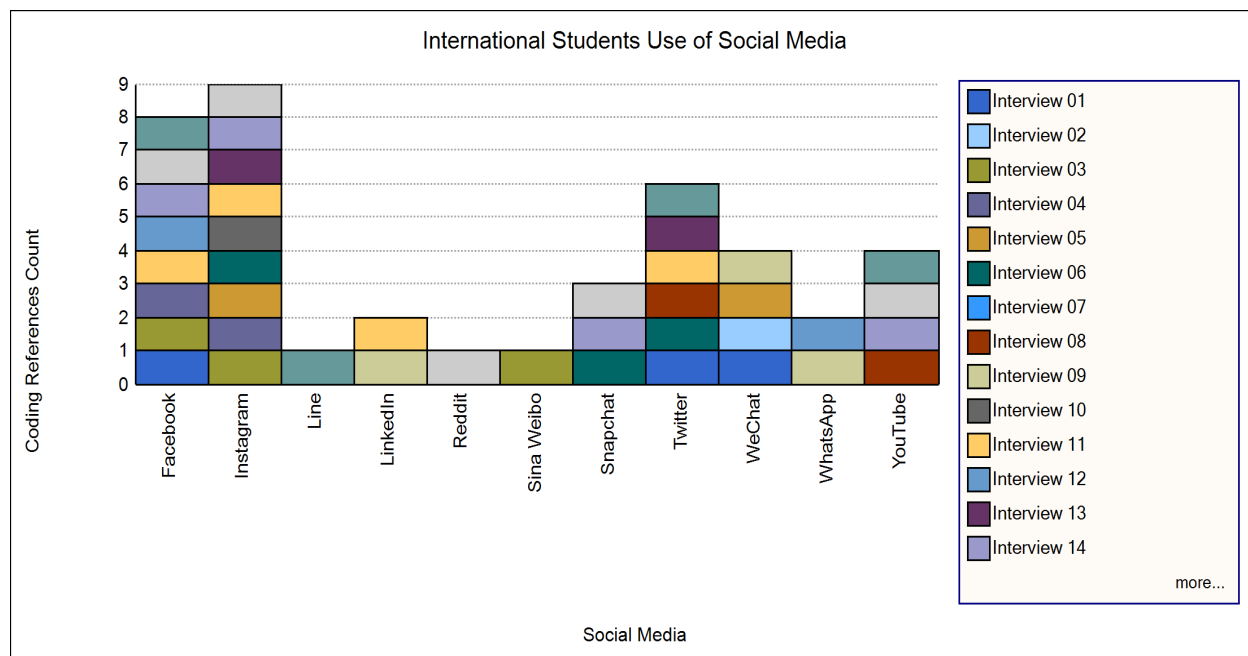


Figure F-2  
Types of Information Needs International Students Have

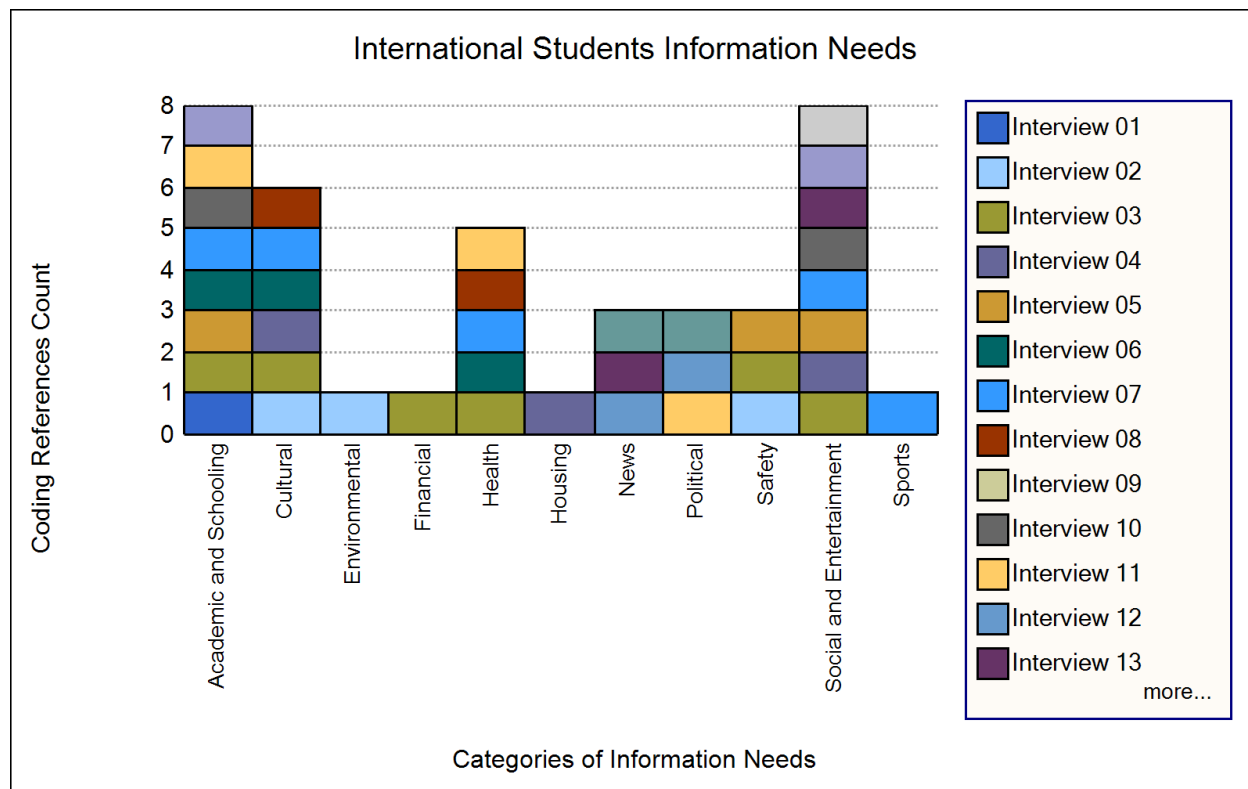
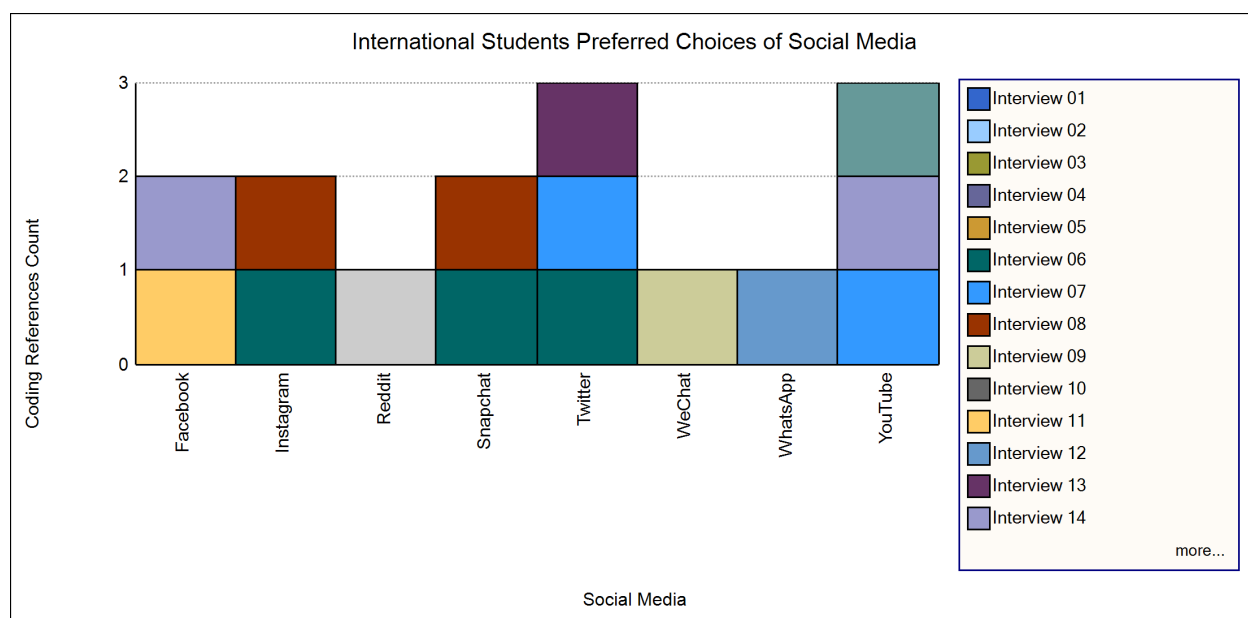


Figure F-3  
International Students Favorite Form of Social Media



## Appendix G

Created By: Jan Weissman

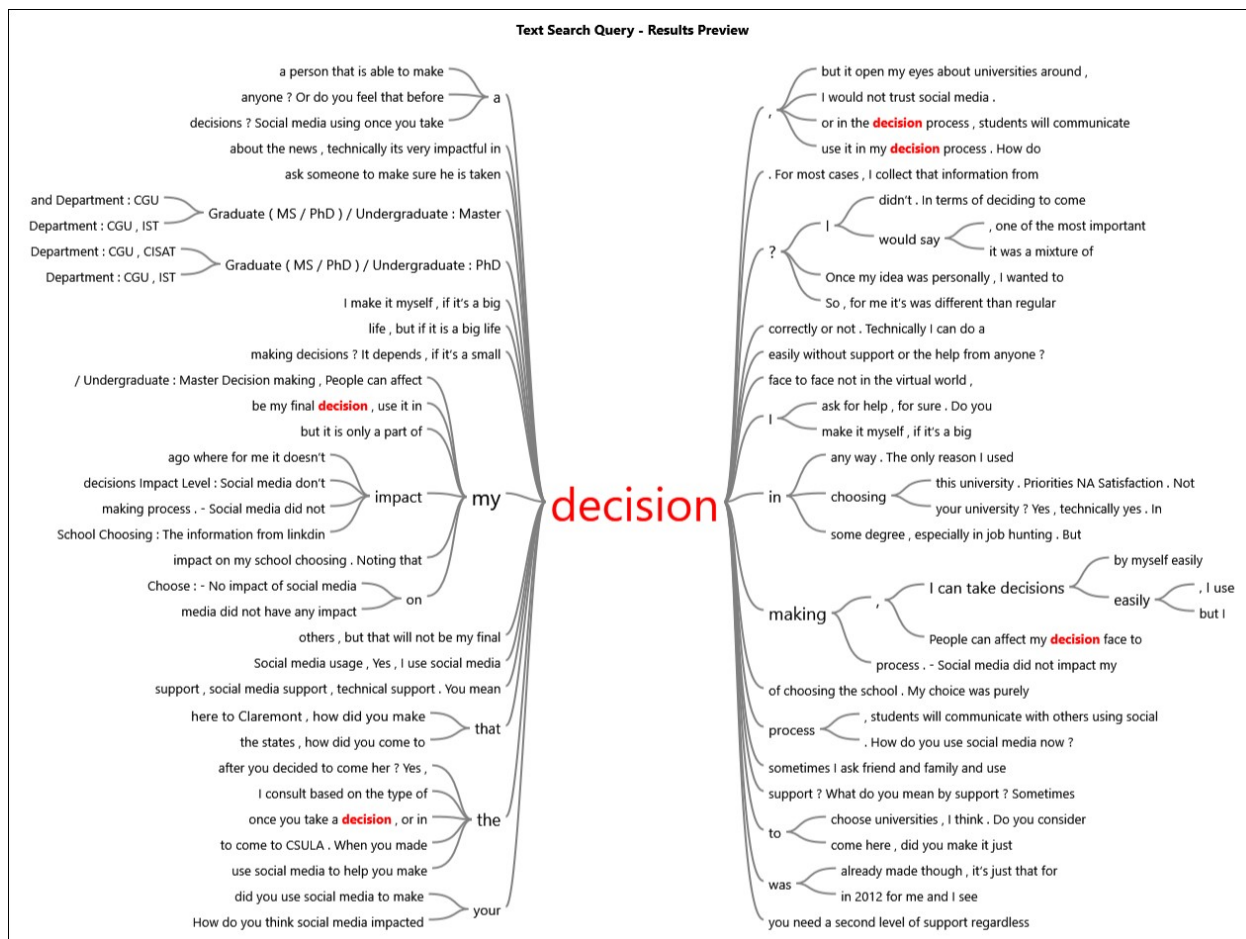
Figure G-1  
Fifty Most Years from Data Collection



# Appendix H

Created By: Jan Weissman

Figure H-1  
Word Tree Created Using "decision"



## Appendix I

Created By: Jan Weissman

### Coding - Used for Decisions When Choosing School

<Files\\Interview 01> - § 1 reference coded [22.31% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 22.31% Coverage

The information from social media had no impact on my school choosing. Academic reputation and school ranking were the main reasons that I chose this school. I got this information from Google, and US News Ranking, rather than social media.

<Files\\Interview 02> - § 1 reference coded [37.21% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 37.21% Coverage

WeChat Group, get school information from friends, I talked to them about each school. When I select the list of graduate school, I made a list with 10 school, and ranked them from A to E, based on academic, social life, cultural, and safety. And one school, USC, was cut from this list due to its horrible environment and bad safety.

<Files\\Interview 03> - § 1 reference coded [18.27% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 18.27% Coverage

The information from Social Media I listed above doesn't impacted on my choosing school because I already did my own research through internet for the school choosing.

<Files\\Interview 04> - § 1 reference coded [18.02% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 18.02% Coverage

Social media did not have any impact on my decision of choosing the school. My choice was purely based on my past experiences in the education department and the affordability of fees.

<Files\\Interview 05> - § 1 reference coded [26.22% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 26.22% Coverage

I got some school reputation from Facebook, in Facebook found CGU Group, I got some information about CGU; also one of my friend is an art student in CGU, she posted some pictures about CGU in WeChat, I saw those pictures and getting some social life information about CGU.

<Files\\Interview 06> - § 1 reference coded [23.62% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 23.62% Coverage

The information from social media had no impact on my school choosing. Noting that my decision was in 2012 for me and I see that social media that time has less power in 2012

Compared to 2019 than nowadays. I got this information from Google, and US News Ranking, rather than social media.

<Files\\Interview 07> - § 1 reference coded [7.14% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.14% Coverage

The information from social media had no impact on my school choosing. Mainly google search impact my decisions more

<Files\\Interview 08> - § 1 reference coded [9.52% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 9.52% Coverage

The information from social media had no impact on my school choosing. Mainly google search impact my decisions more

<Files\\Interview 09> - § 2 references coded [22.47% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 16.47% Coverage

### **Social Media and School Choosing:**

The information from linkdin impact my decision in some degree, especially in job hunting. But I think social media could affect people decisions

Reference 2 - 6.01% Coverage

Social media don't impact my decision In choosing this university.

<Files\\Interview 10> - § 2 references coded [23.18% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 19.53% Coverage

### **Social Media and School Choosing:**

It doesn't not impact my decisions in choosing this university because I choose university based on other type of sources such as newspaper and searching to know the ranking

Reference 2 - 3.64% Coverage

Social media don't impact my decisions.

<Files\\Interview 12> - § 1 reference coded [2.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.36% Coverage

How you use it for Academic or schooling?  
For academic, I don't use social media.

<Files\\Interview 13> - § 1 reference coded [6.63% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.63% Coverage



How did you use social media to make your decision?

I would say it was a mixture of Instagram and also community like using WhatsApp, or anything to talk to my friends that were already here.

<Files\\Interview 14> - § 1 reference coded [5.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.79% Coverage

How did you look up information about the schools?

Yeah sure, not on social media, just used Google, and then went to school home pages.

<Files\\Interview 15> - § 1 reference coded [8.98% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 8.98% Coverage

Did you use social media to decide which school were coming to?

No

How did you research the schools?

So, my university in Norway has a list of schools that they cooperate with. I just looked up the ones in California and I figured out what I would like.

<Files\\Interview 16> - § 1 reference coded [6.71% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.71% Coverage

How do you think social media impacted your decision in choosing your university?

Yes, technically yes. In particular, like Facebook I think, when I listen to news or media on Facebook. They have some media from some universities like CGU, MIT, Harvard, Stanford on YouTube.

## Appendix J

Created By: Jan Weissman

### Coding - Satisfied with Social Media Choices?

<Files\\Interview 01> - \$ 1 reference coded [11.85% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 11.85% Coverage

The information from social media is kind of biased, different people have different opinions and different way of thinking.

<Files\\Interview 02> - \$ 1 reference coded [10.85% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 10.85% Coverage

it is only a part of my decision. For most cases, I collect that information from Google or Baidu.

<Files\\Interview 03> - \$ 1 reference coded [6.16% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.16% Coverage

The information from social media is helpful information.

<Files\\Interview 04> - \$ 1 reference coded [22.53% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 22.53% Coverage

Social media for me is a fish-market, and I would be happy to refer it in order to take minute or low-impact decisions (restaurants, salons, others.) but not for life decisions or decisions that involve such high financial burdens

<Files\\Interview 05> - \$ 1 reference coded [12.25% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 12.25% Coverage

Social Media provide important information to my normal life, but if it is a big life decision, I would not trust social media.

<Files\\Interview 06> - \$ 1 reference coded [3.24% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.24% Coverage

Satisfaction.

Approximately satisfied

<Files\\Interview 07> - \$ 2 references coded [15.81% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 11.48% Coverage

Twitter , YouTube, I try to use snapchat, Instagram but I see that it about others personal life, threat privacy so I don't like it., I use Facebook before but I give up using Facebook.

Reference 2 - 4.33% Coverage

satisfied especially twitter from both quality and level of information

<Files\\Interview 08> - \$ 1 reference coded [3.58% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.58% Coverage

Satisfaction.

Approximately satisfied

<Files\\Interview 09> - \$ 1 reference coded [13.01% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 13.01% Coverage

Not satisfied with information from social media platforms and application , I prefer to use professional database to know more information

<Files\\Interview 12> - \$ 1 reference coded [6.06% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.06% Coverage

When you use social media, how does it meet your needs?

I do further research, that is only a triggering point. I don't take anything, any, I won't believe that, but that I will use it as my research material.

<Files\\Interview 13> - \$ 1 reference coded [7.35% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.35% Coverage

Are you satisfied with your choices of social media?

To be honest, I'd say I'm happy, because if there was anything else, I'd probably spend too much time on them. I already spend too much time already, I think so.

<Files\\Interview 14> - \$ 1 reference coded [9.55% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 9.55% Coverage

Do you think you are satisfied with the social media you use? Would you like to see anything different?

I think, yeah sure, it does meet my needs. As long as I can connect with my friends, wherever they are, like it's okay.

<Files\\Interview 15> - \$ 1 reference coded [6.64% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.64% Coverage

Do you think you're satisfied with what you get from the social media you use?

Yes

Would you like to see any changes?

Yes, too many advertisements. But I know that's not going to change.

## Appendix K

Created By: Jan Weissman

### Coding – Personality of the Students Interviewed

<Files\\Interview 06> - § 1 reference coded [11.17% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 11.17% Coverage

I can take decisions easily, I use the internet to gather information, but I think that social media don't impact or effect my decisions.

<Files\\Interview 07> - § 1 reference coded [8.24% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 8.24% Coverage

I can take decisions easily but I consult based on the type of the decision sometimes I ask friend and family and use social media also

<Files\\Interview 08> - § 1 reference coded [15.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 15.79% Coverage

Decision making,

I can take decisions easily, I use the internet to gather information, google is my choice to search and gather information, social media doesn't impact or effect my decisions,

<Files\\Interview 09> - § 1 reference coded [7.73% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.73% Coverage

Decision making,

People can affect my decision face to face not in the virtual world

<Files\\Interview 10> - § 1 reference coded [5.42% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.42% Coverage

**Decision making,**

I can take decisions by myself easily

<Files\\Interview 11> - § 2 references coded [10.80% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.68% Coverage

In general, how do you make decisions?

Its more like if there is an opportunity, and what's the cost of that opportunity, and if I will be able to pay that cost. It doesn't have to be spontaneous, timewise, social wise, and like family or not, in all those decisions.

Reference 2 - 5.11% Coverage

Do you listen to friends and family when you're making decisions?

I might consider it at points, but then even if there is a majority of a certain direction, it's not necessary that I take the same direction, just because family told me too.

<Files\\Interview 12> - § 1 reference coded [20.55% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 20.55% Coverage

In general, how do you make decisions? Do you listen to friends and family when you're making decisions?

What I do generally, I just understand what I'm trying to do. Then indirectly, I take the opinions from my friends and others, not directly because sometimes they don't understand, they don't think the way I think. Because I'm the person wanted to do, I have self-motivation, they don't have that motivation, I just grab the general idea from them, then maybe sometimes I expose it right away, I'm asking that, then they get the feeling. Of course, after that I will get the opinions from the families. Generally, I observe and listen to others, but that will not be my final decision, use it in my decision process.

<Files\\Interview 13> - § 2 references coded [14.67% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 10.63% Coverage

In general, how do you make decisions? Do you listen to friends and family when you're making decisions?

I would say in general; I'd say I'm definitely be influenced by people's experiences. I definitely account for that, but at the same time, like I would say that I'm pretty independent when comes to that.

Reference 2 - 4.03% Coverage

So, you listen to what they say?

I consider that, then I make my own decisions based off that. It's done well so far.

<Files\\Interview 14> - § 1 reference coded [8.92% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 8.92% Coverage

In general, how do you make decisions? Do you listen to friends and family when you're making decisions?

It depends, if it's a small decision I make it myself, if it's a big decision I ask for help, for sure.

<Files\\Interview 15> - § 1 reference coded [12.80% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 12.80% Coverage

When you made the decision to come here, did you make it just yourself? Did you listen to family members?

It was pretty much just myself.

If your family didn't want you to come here, would you listen? Did you do what you wanted?

My dad wasn't to happy, he didn't want me to come. He likes having family close. He basically doesn't like having me far away. I guess.

<Files\\Interview 16> - \$ 1 reference coded [5.49% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.49% Coverage

Technically I can do a search on my own. Ok, I listen to people talking, that can be indirectly impact me. But I don't need other people to consult them. Sometimes I watch YouTube and I think humm, that can be indirect impact.